

The Complex Needs of Gifted Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder



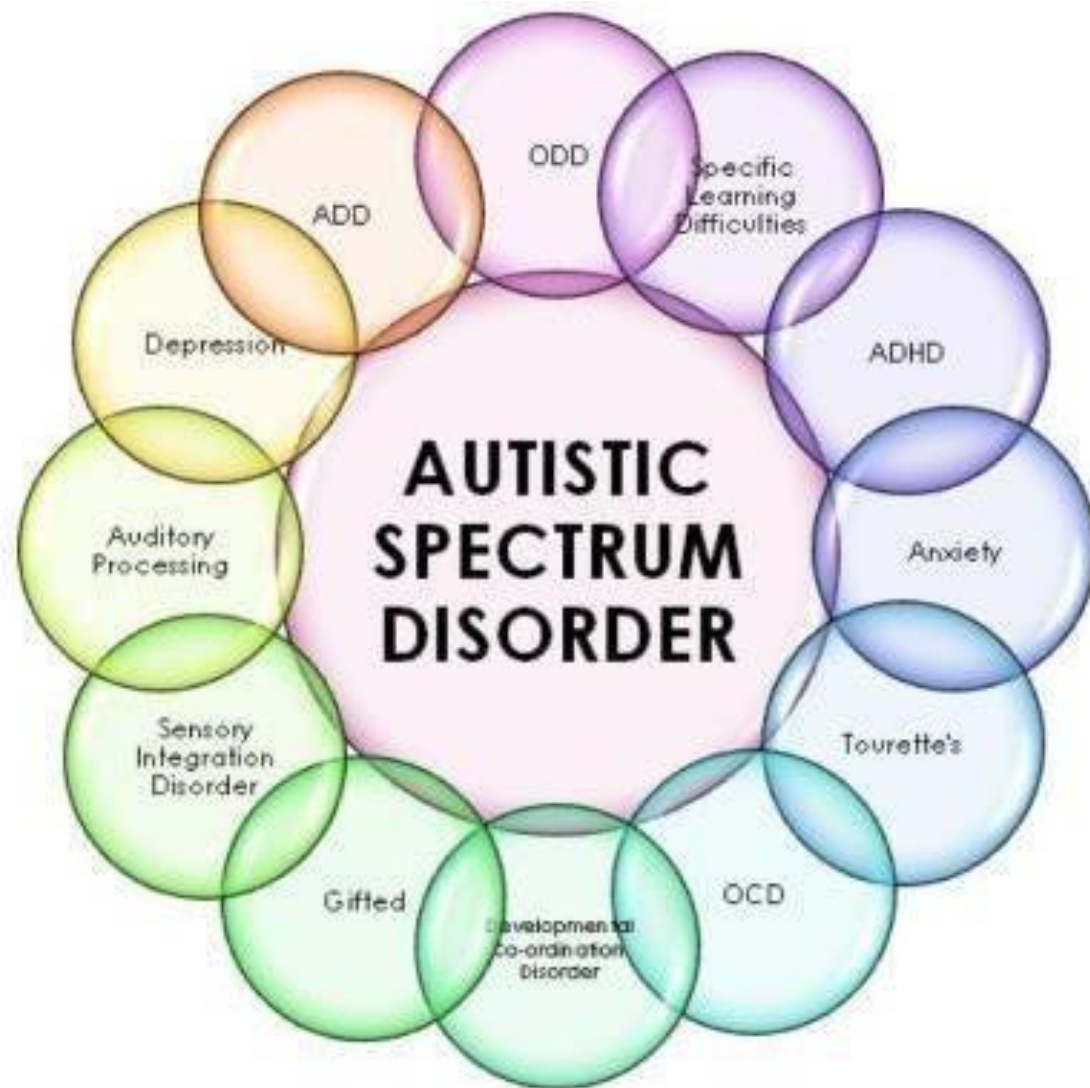
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Problem/Issue



Twice exceptionality
exists: Gifted
students can have a
co-existing disability
such as Autism





Examples of Importance



- **Disabilities mask student's giftedness**
(Bianco & Leech, 2010; Foley Nicpon et al. 2013).
- **Predictors of achievement for twice exceptional students are different than for gifted individuals without a disability.**
(Assouline et al, 2012)
- **Gifted students with disabilities are at risk for misdiagnosis.**
(Assouline et al, 2009)
- **High ability youth with disabilities have complex needs.**
(Doobay et al, 2014; Foley Nicpon et al, 2011)

Research Findings on the effects of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) on gifted students



Assouline, Foley Nicpon, and Dockery (2012) examined the predictability of academic achievement among gifted students with ASD.

Research Findings Continued



Bianco and Leech (2010) explored the differences among teachers' perceptions of students with and without disabilities and their likeliness to refer them to a gifted program.

Research Findings Continued



Assouline, Foley Nicpon, and Doobay (2009) demonstrated how comprehensive assessments reveal similarities and differences in the psychometric characteristics among gifted students with and without ASD.

Research Findings Continued



Doobay, Foley Nicpon, Ali, and Assouline (2014) conducted a study to investigate the characteristics of high ability youth with and without ASD.

Research Findings Continued



Foley Nicpon, Assouline, and Colangelo (2013) conducted a study to learn about educational professionals' awareness of gifted education and twice exceptional students.

Limitation/Weaknesses

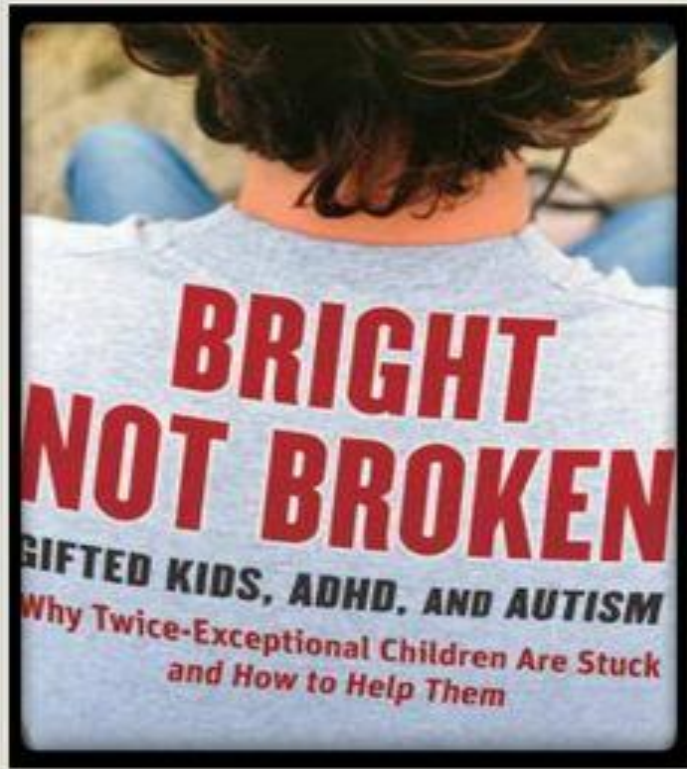


Research has predominately examined characteristics of twice-exceptionality in general.

Foley Nicpon, Allmon, Sieck, and Stinson (2011) recommended research that examines each diagnosis or exceptionality individually. Investigating “twice-exceptionality” in general misses the vast differences between the disabilities.

Research on gifted students with ASD has mostly focused on characteristic differences and the risks of misidentification.

Research Purpose



The purpose of this study is to investigate families' perceptions of the educational experiences and needs of gifted students with ASD.

Research Questions



- a. How do parents of high ability students with ASD describe their characteristics with regard to cognitive, academic, adaptive, behavioral and social/emotional characteristics?
- b. How do families feel about the treatments and intervention techniques that are used for high ability students with ASD?

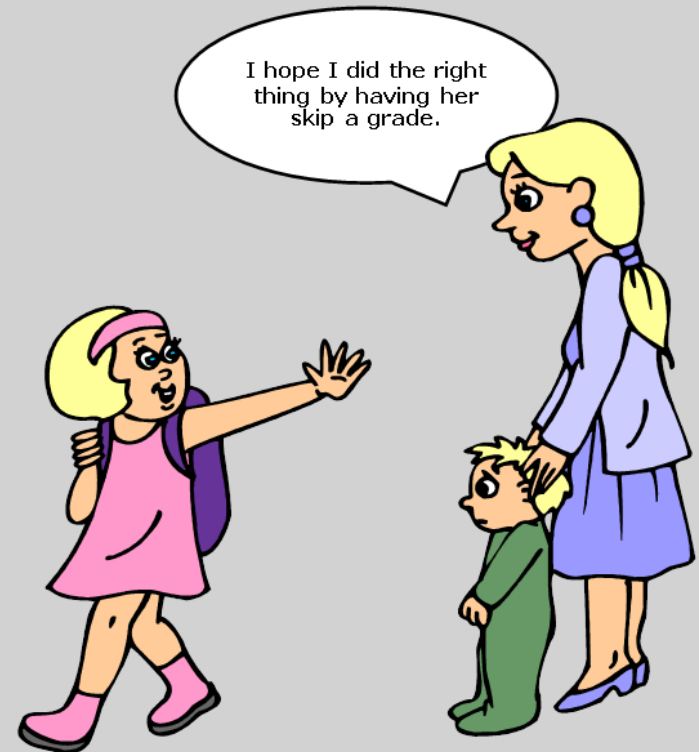


Participants



Adult family members of elementary, middle, and high school students who are:

- Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and
- Identified as gifted or demonstrate high ability in at least one content area.



Procedures



- Informed consent will be obtained from volunteers who are 18 years of age or older.
- Information about the study, including its purpose and benefits, will be provided to the volunteers.
- Data and information from the participants will be kept securely to maintain confidentiality.

Volunteers

- A need for volunteers was communicated through the Autism Speaks website.
- Colleagues outside of the school setting were also used to seek out volunteers for this study.



- Two to five participants are needed for this study.
- Currently: one participant

If you or someone you know fits the criteria for this study and is interested in participating, please contact me or speak with me after this presentation.

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Research Design: Case Study



- Provides an insightful description of teachers and families' understanding of the complex needs of gifted students with ASD.
- Case studies follow the constructivist approach, which believes that society is constructed through the relationships of individuals.
- Researchers who use case studies strive to understand the behavior of individuals by examining the influence of their environment on their actions (Gagnon, 2009).

Data Collection



- Semi-structured interview process.
- Interview will be conducted by telephone or face to face.
- Use of interview guide (Appendix A)
- Conversations will be tape recorded.
- Notes will be taken during the interview

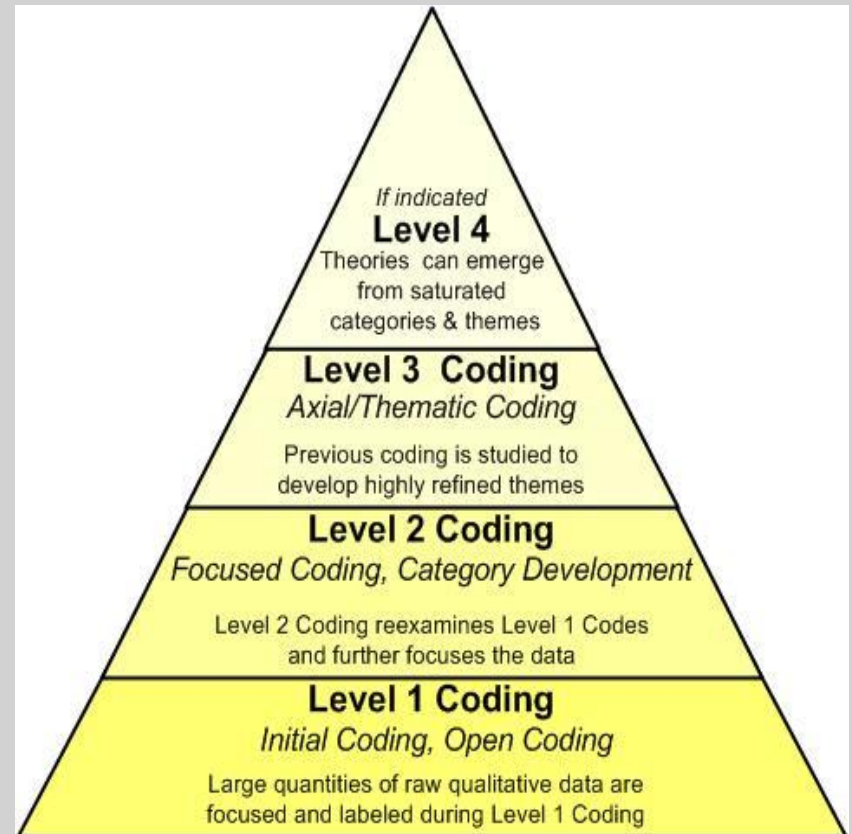
Data Analysis



Method

- Grounded Theory
- Data collection and data analysis will occur simultaneously.
- Conducted interviews will be transcribed using Microsoft Word.

Coding



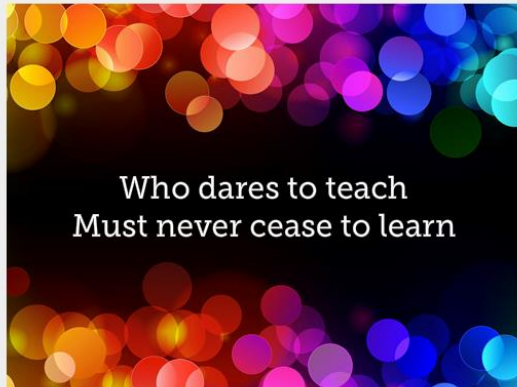
Validity/Reliability



Member checks

Preliminary analysis
will be shared with
the participants to
get feedback on the
trueness of the
findings.

Implications & Learning Outcomes



The study is likely to result:

- Useful information that is advantageous to the parents of gifted children with Autism
- A better understanding of the complex needs and learning experiences of gifted students with Autism.
- How to best meet student's needs through instruction and intervention.

Learning equals Experience Reflection plus

- Using research based practices
- Getting involved in research myself.
- Understanding the research process and the benefits.
- Learning about myself as a professional.

Bennett's (2003) sums it up perfectly...

“Experienced teacher-researchers stated that their research brought them many personal and professional benefits, including increased collegiality, a sense of empowerment, and increased self-esteem.”

Appendix A:



- Tell me a little about your child.
- How and when was your child diagnosed with Autism?
- What led your child to being tested for giftedness?
- What has been the most challenging aspect of your child's dual diagnosis?
- How does your child express his or her emotions toward you and others?
 - Can you give any examples?
- Describe the school supports for your child.
 - What accommodation do they receive?
- How effective has your child's education been?
- To what extent is your child's school meeting their needs?
 - How can they improve?
- Describe your relationship with your child's teacher.
- Describe your child's relationship with his/her teacher.
- What are your biggest concerns for your child?

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